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SUBJECT: IRAN: AHMADINEJAD NAMES INTEL AND TWO FEMALE MINISTERS

CLASSIFIED BY: Alan Eyre, Director, Iran Regional Presence
Office, DOS.

REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: In a live August 16 televised address, President Ahmadinejad discussed the criteria for his cabinet selections and named six of the 21 ministers. Of note is Ahmadinejad's candidate for the Ministry of Intelligence, Hojjat ol-Eslam Heydar Moslehi, who has ties to both Supreme Leader Khamenei and Ahmadinejad, and female selections for the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Welfare and Social Security. The women, if approved by the Majlis, will be the Islamic Republic's first female ministers. The current ministers of Industry and Mines, Cooperatives, and Economic Affairs will remain in place. Ahmadinejad said he would forward his remaining nominations to the Majlis, and discuss his cabinet picks in another live broadcast, on Wednesday. End Summary

Background on the New Nominees

¶2. (C) Hojjat ol-Eslam Heydar Moslehi, age unknown, is the proposed Minister of Intelligence. Moslehi has ties to both Supreme Leader Khamenei and Ahmadinejad. He serves as Khamenei's representative to the IRGC ground forces and the Charity Organization and was previously the Supreme Leader's representative in the IRGC air force and Basij. Moslehi was Ahmadinejad's advisor for clerical affairs, served on an Ahmadinejad committee intended to increase his government's interaction with clerics in Qom, and has also been active in politics on behalf of Ahmadinejad. According to Iranian press, he has accused Iran's reformers of being American stooges and reportedly described the September 11 attacks as an 'American Christian and Zionist plan to put pressure on Islam.'

¶3. (C) Dr. Marzieh Vahid Dastjerdi, age 50, is the proposed Minister of Health. Dr. Dastjerdi is currently an advisor to the President of Tehran University Medical School, manager of the medical school's international relations, and head of the medical school's branch at Kish Island. She was a Majlis deputy from Tehran in the fourth and fifth Majlis (1992-2000) and was rumored as a possible choice for Minister of Health in 2005. She served in health-related committees in the Majlis and previously worked in the Ministry of Health. She received a medical degree from Tehran University. We have not identified clear ties to Ahmadinejad.

14. (C) Fatima Ajorlu, age 43, is the proposed Minister for Welfare and Social Security. She is the current Majlis deputy from Karaj and a long-time Ahmadinejad supporter, having served on his election committee in 2005. Her career in politics began in the Basij; prior to becoming a deputy she served as the head of various student Basij organizations. She attained greater notoriety in 2008 after being interrogated by the Judiciary for her role in allegations of corruption against the Judiciary and several clerics. She has a degree in psychology and is pursuing a doctorate in psychology.

5.(C) COMMENT: The selections of Moslehi and Ajorlu in particular are consistent with expectations that Ahmadinejad would name allies and those with ties to the Basij. Moslehi's ties to the Supreme Leader also reflect the likely necessity that Ahmadinejad had to choose someone amenable to Khamenei as Intelligence Minister. We will be providing further analysis of Ahmadinejad's nominees as they are known.

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